




Naomi came in at quarter of seven and went straight for the coffee.



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MOOD: 😊 fictional

MUSIC: Richard Thompson - I'll Never Give Up

Naomi came in at quarter of seven and went straight for the coffee. I didn't need to ask if it'd been bad, but I had to give her an opening, so I said, "Doc Gordon was right?"

"Oh fuck yes, Doc Gordon was right," Naomi said immediately, like tapping a keg that was ready to blow. "Vernon never came home last night, and they just figured his girlfriend was lying to them about it."

"Nice," I said. "Girlfriend?"

"Yeah. Fuck." She put about half the sugar bowl in her coffee and began grimly opening creamers, one after another. Naomi took her coffee black. "Peggy Marie Procnaw."

"Oh jeez," I said helplessly, because Peggy Marie was one of the town Good Girls and seriously the last thing we needed to add to the mess on our plate. "You think she's our footprint girl?"

"No, I fucking well do not," Naomi said. "I cannot see Peggy Marie setting one foot on Sutter property, no matter *what* Vernon promised her."

"But the Weatherbees thought she'd lie to them," I said, as if I didn't know what kind of a horror Marion Weatherbee was and the things she'd accused adults of with less reason. My personal feeling was that Marion needed a therapist, if not some very heavy drugs, but it wasn't like anybody was asking for my advice.

Naomi turned around expressly to roll her eyes at me. "Don't be a dumbass, sheriff." And then her face changed. "You skinny piece of shit."

I grinned at her. "Count your creamers, Naomi."

She turned back, looked at the devastation, and cracked up.

"I'd give you hazard pay if I could," I said.

"And I have earned it," she said. "You know, I don't think I can drink this."

"I don't think you should try. Did the Weatherbees tell you anything helpful?"

She sighed, and her shoulders slumped. "Well, Dale knew about the door being broken. He was going to go fix it this weekend."

Every landlord in town had Dale Weatherbee as their maintenance man; he did it on the side of running the hardware store.

"So Vernon knew."

"Yeah. Dale says Vernon knew." She poured a fresh cup of coffee, put nothing in it, and came and sat down on the other side of the desk.

"So Vernon was cheating on Peggy Marie."

"That's kind of how I figure it," Naomi said. "But, you know, we don't *know* that. For that matter, we don't know he's *dating* Peggy Marie." She raised an eyebrow at me. The complicated social life of Naomi's teenage son had carried us through more than one drive across Clayton County, and I understood what she meant.

"Well," I said, "I guess I know where to start, then."

TAGS: down the rabbit hole



This looks like a
good idea.

...

This.


...

Little guy's not
bad.

Gotta teach RHex
to smear.

2 comments



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Curse you, Mr. It, for hooking us on your salty popcorn for the eyes!



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More? *grins*

Oh, and I love how you nail small towns.